



TAG & RELEASE

Volume 9, No. 4 July 2004

16TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

- April 28-
May 1** ***Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Deidre Menefee
 19 Forde Row
 Charleston SC 29412
 843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- May 5-8** ***Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Bryan Richardson/Damien Zanetti
 1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.
 Johns Island SC 29455
 843-768-1280 FAX 843-768-3481
- May 16-22** ***Charleston Harbor HMY Viking Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Deidre Menefee
 19 Forde Row
 Charleston SC 29412
 843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- June 2-5** ***37th Annual Georgetown Landing Marina Tournament***
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
 P.O. Box 1704
 Georgetown SC 29442
 843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- June 24-26** ***MegaDock Tournament***
Contact: Emily S. Arthur
 P.O. Box 759
 Charleston SC 29402
 843-577-7705
- For more information contact:
Tom DuPre'
Office of Fisheries Management
 843-953-9365
email: dupret@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us
<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html>

A RELEASE TODAY IS A FISH TOMORROW!
Fish Responsibly!

"BILLISTIC" WINS MEGADOCK BILLFISHING TOURNAMENT IN GOVERNOR'S CUP SERIES

From June 24-26, the 16th Annual South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series wrapped up its last out of five tournaments, the MegaDock Billfishing Tournament.

As for the MegaDock Billfishing Tournament, "This was a wonderful tournament that was hosted at a super facility and was very professionally run," said Tom DuPré of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, who coordinates the tournament series. "The staff was highly motivated and competent, and the food and entertainment were both great."

A total of 25 billfish were released during the MegaDock Billfishing tournament. Forty-three of the 45 boats that participated in the tournament fished two out of the three days.

Points for Governor's Cup tournaments are awarded as follows: 300 points for a tagged or released blue marlin, 150 points for a tagged or released white marlin, and 100 points for a tagged or released sailfish.

"Billistic," owned by Hutch Holsberg of Eutawville captured the Best Billfish Boat award. Holsberg released a sailfish and a blue marlin to earn "Billistic" 400 points, while angler Jimmy McCormick of Summerville released a sailfish to earn the boat another 100 points.

Finishing in second place at the MegaDock Billfishing Tournament for releasing a blue marlin was "Done Diggin," owned by Jimmy Brewer of Murrells Inlet. The angler was Brad Brewer of Garden City.

"Second Love III," owned by Arthur Swygert of Johns Island came in third in the tournament when Robby Renken of

Charleston released a blue marlin.

A 57.6-pound wahoo earned angler Kate Freeman of Charleston the Biggest Wahoo Award. Freeman landed the wahoo aboard "Triple Play," owned by Art, Jimmy and Bubba Hightower of Hanahan and Moncks Corner.

The Biggest Tuna Award went to Rob Montgomery of Beaufort, who reeled in a 70.9-pound yellowfin tuna aboard "Top Billing," owned by Top Billing Enterprises of Salisbury, North Carolina.

As for the Biggest Dolphin Award, angler Buddy Aimar of Charleston caught a 34.0-pound dolphin aboard "Hey Doc," owned by Alan Fogle of Charleston.

The Outstanding Female Angler Award went to Berta Freeman of Charleston, who released a sailfish. Freeman hooked the fish aboard "Summer Session," owned by John Stevens of Yorges Island.

The Outstanding Youth Angler Award went to 13-year-old Rob Johnson of Mount Pleasant who released a white marlin on "Petrel IV," owned by Harry Johnson of Charleston.

Funds from each tournament are used to support a broad range of marine fisheries research and conservation efforts each year.

The Governor's Cup Board of Directors took an unprecedented step this year by making "tagging" an optional part of the tournament series. Now points can be accumulated for properly catching and releasing billfish, so tagging is no longer required to receive release points. Anglers are still encouraged to tag tuna, dolphin and wahoo as part of the bluewater conservation endeavor, and to help support on-going studies of these species.

For more information on the South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series contact Tom DuPré of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources by e-mail at dupret@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us, by phone at (843) 953-9365, or visit the Web site at <http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html> to keep up with the standings.

Written by Jennie R. Davis

INSIDE GEORGETOWN

The 37th Annual Georgetown Billfishing Tournament, the first and oldest billfishing tournament in SC, started with a roster of 56 boats. Thursday (day 1) yielded calm seas and basically few bites. Many boats got skunked while others were lucky to have 1-2 dolphin knock down bait. Day one saw small dolphin. "Fishwrapper" took the day 1 lead in that category with a 28.3 pounder. John Thomas landed a nice 55.5 lb yellowfin on the "Aut-Top-Sea", while "Insane-o's" lady angler Diane Williams placed with a 49.2 lb. wahoo and "Major Motion" placed in the "hoo" category with a 50.4 pounder. After day one Petrel's 13-year-old Rob Johnson held the lead for youth angler with a 16.6 lb. dolphin.



Meri DuPré (Tom's better half) made her first offshore fishing trip ever, aboard the "Micabe". They only caught two small dolphin, but; she had a thoroughly wonderful time. Later that day rumors began to surface, associating her presence offshore to the poor catch of day. These rumors were thoroughly investigated by SCDNR staff and were proven to be simply a strange coincidence.



Despite the slow bite, day 2 saw close to 40 boats fishing, many believing that poor weather would set in by Saturday. The marlin finally showed up with "Houdini" and "Fishwrapper" releasing a blue each and the "Game On" landing a 1037/8 inch weighing 412 lbs to take the lead. The only other lead change was in the dolphin category with "No Problem" bringing in a 36.9 pounder. As the day ended and a stiff wind continued to blow steadily through the marina, most believed they had made the right decision to fish day 2 rather than risk it for what would appear to be rough fishing on Saturday.

As fate would have it, day 3 began with overcast skies, light variable breezes and glassy waters inshore. Offshore, wasn't as nice with 8' rollers coming thorough, but it was definitely fishable. Again the bite was slow, but as the event came to a close there were some interesting catches. Youth angler Andre Dembosky from the "Aut-Top-Sea" took that category as well as the dolphin category for a 39 lb. bull and "Heartbreaker" took the wahoo lead with 53.5 lbs.



The awards banquet was full of fun and surprises. Host Ricky Ferdon did a masterful job as MC and surprised everyone at the end by presenting the Wallace Pate Conservation Award to our very own Tom DuPre' for his years of dedication and service with the Series. Despite the perceived lack of fish, some rather interesting changes took place in the Series standings. "Game On" pulled into the lead over "Golden Lady" by a margin of only 12 points. Third place was being barely held on to by "Houdini" with three other boats close behind, separated by only 32 points. "Aut-Top-Sea" took the tuna category away from "Second Love III" by a mere 1.0 lb.



INSIDE MEGADOCK

The final event in the 2004 SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series (MegaDock) had several boats neck and neck in the Series heading down the stretch toward the finish line. First place "Game On" lead second place "Golden Lady" by only 12 points. Third place "Done Diggin'" gained their final 25 entry points when they entered the tournament giving them 582 points. This ever so slight lead over "Houdini", "Major Motion" and "Pipe Layer", all with 525 points, set the stage for a battle royale for all the top spots.

The event started Wednesday, 23 June 04 with an exciting and fun Captains' meeting under the big tent, followed by a good ole' southern barbeque dinner. Forty-five boats were now in the tournament, many competing for a prize unique to this event ("The MegaMillion Jackpot"), which will be given to the boat that breaks the state's blue marlin record of 752lbs - 6oz, caught by D.F. Pearce



of Mt Pleasant, 11 years ago to the day. With seas expected to kick up on Thursday, only four boats saw fit to give it a try on day 1, ("Houdini", "Juncanewt", "Summer Session", and "Special Lady"). As is sometimes the case the weatherman can be wrong. Seas were not that rough and it paid off for "Houdini" who landed and released a white marlin and



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for "Special Lady" who brought in a 57 lb. wahoo caught by youth angler Fran Johnson, which temporarily put him in the lead for the Series "Youth Angler" category.

Day two was beautiful. The ocean was like a lake and many were complaining it was too calm, but the fish cooperated. Twenty-one billfish, including 15 sailfish, 3 blue and 3 white marlin were caught and released. "Billistic" with a blue and a sail took the day 2 lead with 400 points, followed by "Done Diggin" and "Second Love III" with 300 points each. Day 2 also saw some changes in other "Series" categories. Rob Montgomery of "Top Billing" brought in a

70.9 lb yellowfin and 15 year old Kate Freeman on the "Triple Play" landed a 57.6 lb wahoo, both of which toppled the current "Series" leaders. Rob Johnson on the "Petrel" took back the lead in the youth angler category when he caught and released a white marlin. Three ladies ended up catching and releasing sailfish. Since Berta Freeman of the "Summer Session" was the first to do it, she took the lead in the tournament's Lady Angler category.

The weather finally turned on Saturday and seas were sloppy. Four billfish were caught, all sails, one each on the "Houdini" and "Billistic" and 2 on the "Game On". Buddy Aimar on the "Hey Doc" brought in the tournament winning dolphin at 34 lbs, and the tournament



and 2004 Series slowly came to an end. The Awards Ceremony was fun; catered by Mike Altine, executive chef of the "Variety Store" restaurant. We ate steak, accompanied with his special mashed potato concoction. Everyone wanted seconds.

A recap of the final event saw many

of the Series leaders toppled. The race for top boat saw "Game On" (987 pts) hold on to the lead to capture Outstanding Billfishing Boat in the Series, followed by "Done Diggin" (882 pts) up from third place, "Golden Lady" (775 pts), dropping from second place; "Houdini" (775 pts) up from fifth place, then "Pipe Layer" (725 pts) and from out of no where "Billistic" with 575 points. Unfortunately for "Major Motion", they developed engine problems and were not able to compete on the final day. "Golden Lady" captured the Outstanding Billfish Conservation category by catching and releasing 2 blues and a sail, all in the Charleston Harbor HMY Viking Tournament. "Done Diggin" held on to the Outstanding Billfish category with their 507 lb. blue marlin caught at Charleston Harbor. Kate Freeman aboard "Triple Play" took the Outstanding Wahoo category away from Lyn Tayloe by 0.6 lbs. The Outstanding Tuna category was taken away from the "Aut-Top-Sea" (55.4 lbs) when "Top Billing" weigh-in at 70.9 lbs. The only category that was unchanged throughout the Series was Outstanding Dolphin (40.7 lbs) caught by Teddy Thornhill aboard the "Rapid Pace" during the first event at Edisto. The lady angler for the series remained Margaret Hood Mevers aboard the "Paradox" with a released Blue Marlin, while the battle for youth angler went back and forth with Rob Johnson holding on with the only released billfish in the youth category. Thirty-one dolphin were tagged during the MegaDock by four different boats, most by "Summer Girl", who ended up with 5300 series points for tagging 101 dolphin, 1 tuna and 1 wahoo, to capture the Series' Bluewater Conservation Award. Congratulations to all our winners.

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SC GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES LEADERS (AFTER MEGADOCK, 2004)

Outstanding Billfish Boat

Points: 2 Blues, (1 released, 1 landed at 412 lbs.: 2 sails released), 987 pts
Boat: *Game On*
Owner: Sea Hunt Boats
Captain: Richard Brackett

Outstanding Billfish Conservationist

Points: 2 Blues, 1 Sail released, 775 pts
Boat: *Golden Lady*
Owner: Chris Morris
Captain: Chris Morris

Blue Water Conservation

Points: 1 Tuna, 101 Dolphin and 1 wahoo (tagged), 5300 pts
Boat: *Summer Girl*
Owner: Smith, Leasure, & Kelly
Captain: Charles Aimar

Outstanding Billfish

Weight: Blue marlin, 507 lbs
Boat: *Done Diggin'*
Owner: Jim Brewer
Angler: Brad Brewer

Outstanding Dolphin

Weight: 40.7 lbs
Boat: *Rapid Pace*
Owner: SHSR Enterprises
Angler: Teddy Thornhill

Outstanding Yellowfin Tuna

Weight: 70.9 lbs
Boat: *Top Billing*
Owner: Top Billing Enterprises
Angler: Rob Montgomery

Outstanding Wahoo

Weight: 57.6 lbs
Boat: *Triple Play*
Owner: Art, Jimmy & Bubba Hightower
Angler: Kate Freeman

Outstanding Youth Angler

Fish: White marlin, released
Boat: *Petrel*
Owner: Harry Johnson
Angler: Rob Johnson

Outstanding Lady Angler

Fish: 1 Blue released
Boat: *Paradox*
Owner: John Hood
Angler: Margaret Hood Mevers

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The S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Law Enforcement Division reminds the public of Coast Watch, which was developed to better help citizens report violations of saltwater recreational and commercial fishing laws, as well as marine environmental laws.

The Coast Watch hotline number (1-800-922-5431) is toll-free and available 24 hours a day.

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